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HEADLINE: Osama bin Laden's half-brother will pay to defend terror mastermind if he's

ever captured

BYLINE: NADIA ABOU EL-MAGD; Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: CAIRO, Egypt

BODY:

One of Osama bin Laden's half-brothers said he would pay for the terror mastermind's defense should he ever be captured, because everyone - even Washington's most wanted man - has the right to defend himself, Yeslam Binladin said in an interview broadcast Sunday.

"For sure," Yeslam Binladin responded when asked. "Everyone has the right to defend himself, anyone who is accused of doing something."

Yeslam and Osama are among 54 sons and daughters of the late Saudi construction magnate Mohammed bin Laden, who had 22 wives. Yeslam said he believed his half-brother, thought to be hiding in the rugged mountains along the Afghan-Pakistan border, was still alive.

"I don't think he's dead," he said in the interview which was recorded on May 28 and aired Sunday.

When asked why U.S. forces had still not been able to track bin Laden down, Yeslam responded: "I don't know, ask them."

Yeslam, at 54, is six years older than Osama. His mother was Iranian, Osama's was Syrian. In the interview Yeslam said his brothers and sisters feared their father, a Saudi of Yemeni origin, who used to beat them.

Yeslam was educated in Lebanon and the United States and returned to Saudi Arabia after graduating from university. He said he spent some time with Osama in Saudi Arabia from 1978-1981 before Osama went to fight alongside other mujahideen against the Soviets in Afghanistan. He did not mention seeing Osama after that.

Yeslam condemned the terror attacks in the United States, and said he issued a statement following the attacks, condemning "all kinds of violence."

Yeslam said that Osama, who had not left Saudi Arabia to study abroad like most of his brothers "was more religious than the rest."

"Osama didn't like music or TV and banned his kids from them," Yeslam said. "I grew up thinking this is weird, but he's free in his household and I'm free in mine."

Wearing a white shirt and light gray suit and clean shaven, Yeslam that unlike Osama he had no political interests and was never interested in the war in Afghanistan.

Instead he is passionate about flying, something he said he would never give up even though his father and one of his brothers perished in plane accidents.

"I would never let anyone in the world take away this right and prevent me from flying," he said.

Yeslam, who was granted Swiss citizenship in 2001 after residing in Geneva since 1985, intentionally spells his name differently from his half brother, the prime suspect in the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks in the United States.

He was married to a Swiss woman and has three daughters, but is now divorced.

Throughout the interview, said to be his first with an Arab television network, he stressed that unlike his half-brother, he was against violence.

"I'm against all kinds of violence, resistance can take many forms without being without violent," Yeslam said. "I'm against it and can't understand anyone who uses it."

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Osama's brother offers to pay for defence

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